

S-E-C-R-E-T

20 May 1966

EE STAFF NOTE

SUBJECT: A View From the Kremlin: de Gaulle and European Security

1. Herbert Spencer, the English philosopher, defined civilization as "a progress from an indefinite, incoherent homogeneity towards a definite, coherent heterogeneity." French President de Gaulle's forthcoming trip to the Soviet Union is to further his personal vision of European civilization -- diversity within unity.

2. The Soviet leaders are aware that talks with de Gaulle will probably not materially advance their political position vis-a-vis Western Europe. Nevertheless, there are a number of topics which the Soviet leadership and de Gaulle can discuss to their mutual advantage. The Soviets will utilize de Gaulle's presence in the Soviet Union as a convenient expedient to propagandize their positions on: (1) a Soviet-French non-aggression pact; (2) European security; (3) Europe's frontiers; (4) the withholding of nuclear weapons from the FRG; (5) German reunification. Though de Gaulle is not likely to reach agreements with the Soviets on any of these issues, his personal vision of a united Europe, sustained by a series of bilateral relationships between sovereign states, will be enhanced by a Soviet-French dialogue.

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3. There is concern among West European states that de Gaulle will offer to sign a nonaggression pact with the Soviet Union. While there is historical precedence for a Soviet-French nonaggression pact, contemporary European realpolitik militates against renewal of past Soviet-French alliances. From the Soviet viewpoint, France, though a disruptive force in NATO, is not a decisive factor in Europe. Consequently, while a Soviet-French nonaggression pact would have the short term advantage of effectively driving a wedge between the NATO countries and France, the Soviets are showing concern that over the long run de Gaulle's disruptive military policies vis-a-vis NATO will place West Germany in the forefront of the NATO alliance, adversely affecting the stability of Europe's balance of power. It is therefore considered unlikely that Soviet-French leadership talks will result in a formal political alliance between the Soviet Union and France.

4. Party General Secretary Brezhnev's revival of the "European Security" concept at the 23rd CPSU Congress, has raised West European interest because of its marked similarity to de Gaulle's vision of "one Europe from the Urals to the Atlantic." The Soviet version of "European Security" was defined by Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko at the 23rd CPSU Congress as, "the development of cooperation based on bilateral and all-European foundations with countries preserving their national identity and sovereignty." To animate this concept the Soviets have proposed the convening of a European security conference on the highest possible level.

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5. It is probable that the Soviet leadership will sound out de Gaulle on lending his personal prestige to the proposed conference. However, crucial to Soviet-French agreement on the need for a security conference would be the probable Soviet insistence on a role for the GDR. It is not likely that de Gaulle will unilaterally support a Soviet proposal that would challenge the FRG's position on nonrecognition of the GDR as a legal entity. De Gaulle, however, is unlikely to dismiss a security conference out of hand. Hewould probably agree, in the interest of determining any change in the Soviet attitude towards German reunification, to the desirability of some future below summit-level meeting of European states to discuss European problems.

6. Regardless of formulation, the "European Security" concept remains primarily a German question. This was demonstrated by Brezhnev's remarks before the 23rd CPSU Congress to the effect that peaceful settlement of the German question is one of the cardinal problems faced by a European security conference. The Soviets will probably press de Gaulle for agreement regarding the specific German question on the following issues: (1) permanence of existing European frontiers; (2) withholding of nuclear weapons from the West German military; (3) German reunification.

7. The Soviet government would like to have the general support of West European governments for the Oder-Neisse frontier. To demonstrate that Soviet interest in Europe's frontiers is not entirely

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parochial, the Soviets claim that the FRG has territorial claims against the Sudetenland, Alsace-Lorraine, the southern Tyrol, parts of Belgium, the Netherlands, and the Soviet union. West Germany is thus presented, in effect, as a general threat to Europe. However, French participation in a communique denouncing West German territorial claims would tend to place de Gaulle in the Soviet camp and would not be in the interest of French independence in international affairs or in keeping with de Gaulle's role as self-appointed arbitrator between East and West. This, of course, does not mean that de Gaulle would necessarily refuse to restate in private conversation his past willingness to accept the permanence of the Oder-Neisse Frontier.

8. The Soviet leadership views West Germany's NATO membership as indirectly linked to Bonn's territorial claims. The Soviets reason that access to nuclear weapons is the key to German territorial ambitions, and it is primarily through NATO, with US agreement, that West Germany can achieve a nuclear weapons capability. In this context it is probable that the Soviets will press de Gaulle for a joint communique condemning West German access to nuclear weapons under any pretext whatsoever. It is unlikely, however, that de Gaulle would agree to such a communique unless it appeared that West German access to nuclear weapons was imminent.

9. The best chance for German reunification in the near future would be on the confederation principle. This, however, implies the

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voluntary cooperation of two co-equal states in a loose political, economic, and social relationship. With these circumstances in mind, it is possible that the Soviets will seek to gain French recognition of the GDR as a primary step in raising the international status of the East German government to parity with that of the FRG. There is further suggestion of this possibility in the strong support given by the Soviets to the GDR's participation in specialized UN agencies and to the GDR's recent request for UN membership. It is unlikely, however, that de Gaulle would agree to recognize the GDR, partly because of West German reactions, but more significantly, also because France's unilateral recognition of the GDR would result in French diplomatic isolation from Western Europe on this important issue.

10. In final evaluation, de Gaulle's trip to the Soviet Union is likely to be considered -- at least by him -- a personal triumph. The Soviets will probably go all out to give him an ego-fulfilling reception, flattering both his self-esteem and, in effect, endorsing his personal creed of French national grandeur. Conjointly, the Soviets and de Gaulle will seek to provide a continued basis for Soviet-French cooperation in Europe. Initially, however, this will probably take the form of only limited Soviet-French cooperation in basic scientific research and space communications, increased trade activity, and the signing of a consular and navigation agreement.

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11. The issues have been drawn. It now remains to be seen if the Soviets will realize more from de Gaulle's visit than a lecture on French glory.



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